

knowledge by enrolling at Bryant Theological Seminary in Georgia, Florida Memorial College and Barry University in Miami-Dade County.

The 17th Congressional District of Florida and its contiguous cities and neighborhoods will surely miss the dedication of this Man of God. The timeliness of his wisdom and the focus of his expertise guided us in committing ourselves to the well-being of the less fortunate, the voiceless and the underrepresented. By establishing the People United to Lead the Struggle for Equality (PULSE), he led the memberships of the Baptist Ministers Council, the Religious Leaders Coalition and the General State Convention to stand by and continue the mission of the civil rights movement.

He was often heard to define the role of the church in its stewardship over the voiceless and the disenfranchised members of society as something analogous to the role that the civil rights leaders played as they resiliently struggled through the harrowing challenges of racial equality and the demands for simple justice and equal opportunity.

I was truly privileged to enjoy the friendship of this quintessential Man of God in his understanding of and commitment to the less fortunate and downtrodden in our community. The sharpness of his mind, the timeliness of his common sense and the courage of his conviction served to strengthen and guide us when our community and the state of Florida needed someone to put in perspectives the agony and pain of disenfranchised African-Americans and other voiceless minorities yearning to belong and pursue the promise of the American dream.

We lost this giant of a leader when Reverend Stepherson died in the service of his God and his fellowmen on September 8, 1998. Indeed, he exemplified a calm but reasoned leadership whose stewardship and advocacy buttressed our hope for a brighter future. While he is sorely missed by our community, particularly the congregation of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church of Brownsville, we will once again be given the opportunity to thank God for uplifting our lives through the stewardship of Reverend Stepherson, who faithfully and religiously consecrated his noble efforts on our behalf.

This fitting but symbolic ceremony is but one small measure of our genuine acknowledgement for his remarkable contributions to the good name of our community. Our collective pride in sharing his friendship is only exceeded by our gratitude for all that he has sacrificed on our behalf. This is the legacy with which we will honor his memory.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF GARY T. PUMA

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the career of Gary T. Puma, the president and chief executive officer of Presbyterian Homes and Services of Princeton for his more than twenty-five years of service to New Jersey's senior citizens and their families.

Mr. Puma's dedication to meeting the needs of the elderly began when he was an under-

graduate at John Fisher College, where he was active in creating a gerontology department. His dream of helping the elderly led him to service on the N.J. State Department of Health and Senior Service—Assisted Living Task Force and the N.J. Housing Mortgage and Finance Authority—Assisted Living Financing Task Force. His expertise has also resulted in testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives and in assisting with the drafting of affordable housing regulations for New Jersey.

Mr. Puma's own Italian immigrant grandparents were his inspiration. Knowing how hard they worked to create a good life for his family here in America gave him a life-long determination to help other older people at a time when they were in need and deserved first-rate housing and care. Because of his grandparents, Mr. Puma has worked tirelessly to bring to life his vision of an organization with a wide spectrum of care and housing options to assist as many seniors as possible. Mr. Puma has refused to accept anything less than excellence in every aspect of the Presbyterian Homes and Services. Under his guidance, Presbyterian Homes and Services received the 1996 New Jersey Governor's Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing.

Wanting to help seniors age in place at home, Mr. Puma conceived of and championed the State's first subsidized assisted living program for seniors who lived in affordable housing. This innovative program has served as a model for other communities in New Jersey and throughout the country, and it has been recognized by AARP and the Assisted Living Federation of America.

As an inspiration to individuals in New Jersey and throughout the country, Gary T. Puma has contributed significantly to the quality of life of thousands of senior citizens regardless of their income or denomination. He has earned our heartfelt appreciation for his efforts. Please join me in congratulating him for his many years of service.

OPINION PIECE FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues the following opinion piece from the New York Times on Sunday, September 21, 2003. Written by Mark L. Kimmey, a lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Reserve and a systems engineer in civilian life, this piece portrays Reservists' frustration with the Defense Department's recent decision to prolong their deployment.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND, FAMILY BACK HOME (By Mark L. Kimmey)

The Army's decision to keep its Reserve forces in Iraq on duty for a full year from their arrival may have profound consequences for both the Army and the war in Iraq. While the Army will gain increased flexibility with its "boots on the ground," the long deployments may demoralize reservists. When mobilization and demobilization are included, 12 months on duty in Iraq will mean a 14- to 16-month separation from family and career for reservists.

"Fair doesn't mean equal," a battalion commander once told me. But the message

to reservists is unmistakable: the Army no longer takes into account sacrifices made to maintain two careers and lives. Many reservists will watch the regular soldiers with whom they came to Iraq go home before they do. The Army may not care about the disparity between the way the forces are treated, but those of us in the Reserve do.

Everyone knows that the regular and Reserve units of the Army are not equal. Regulars are better trained, better equipped and expected to execute their missions more professionally. That's the way it should be: it's their job—their only job.

Reservists have jobs in the civilian world. For a reservist, every day in uniform is a day away from what might be (or might have been) a promising career. Despite the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination against an employee because of military service, we understand that when a dispute with an employer arises, the reservist always loses—even if the employer is forced to take us back. What's more, many of us don't serve long enough to qualify for a military pension—and even if we do, it's not enough to compensate for opportunities missed while we were deployed.

Hardships on Reserve families have increased with longer and more frequent deployments. Reservists don't always have ready access to a military base and its support programs. Left to fend for themselves, Reserve families are becoming more vocal about their unhappiness with the situation. Politicians may not be listening to their complaints, but you can bet we husbands and wives overseas are hearing their pain.

The Army is fond of bragging about the advantages of the all-volunteer force. But reservists are volunteers, too. We sign up for the Reserve when we leave the Army because we want to continue to serve with people we respect. We sign up because we want to serve our country. We sign up for extra income or educational benefits. Some of us sign up to be part of history, for the possibility of adventure. But nobody signs up for occupation duty, especially occupation of a country that never officially surrendered.

It is not a question of performing our duty. I have served as a peacekeeper in the Balkans, a job that most of us found hard but acceptable. Even though most active-duty soldiers were deployed to Bosnia or Kosovo on 180-day assignments—90 days shorter than us reservists—my unit didn't suffer from a flood of resignations after Balkan duty. In fact, we laughed that reservists were providing more continuity there than the regulars.

The problem in Iraq is that the Army doesn't seem to know what to do with us. The Army has only one civil affairs battalion on active duty. Its job is to get in fast, stabilize the situation and then hand responsibilities to a mobilized Reserve unit as quickly as possible.

That's where my Reserve civil affairs brigade comes in. I am a communications officer in a unit filled with higher-ranking officers. Why so many senior soldiers in a civil affairs brigade? Because our knowledge, skills and experience, gained in the civilian world, make us valuable in rebuilding countries like Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the case of my brigade, we've had nothing to do for almost a month. We were originally deployed in support of the First Marine Expeditionary Force, but when it went south to Kuwait at the end of August to begin its journey home, we were left to cool our heels. Our three battalions were dispersed on far-flung assignments. One battalion was sent to Bosnia on a scheduled peacekeeping rotation; another was split, with half reinforcing the 101st Air Assault Division. The remaining soldiers are filling holes in my own unit.